



# Media Toolkit

HELPING JOURNALISTS GET THE STORY — **AND GET IT RIGHT**



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# Training Journalists

## Journalists Can Be Potent Agents of Change



Over the years, PRB has worked with hundreds of journalists from developing countries to help them understand issues related to population, reproductive health, and gender status, so that they can report on them accurately and comprehensively. The print and online articles and broadcast programs they produce can shape the public discourse on these issues and effect policy change. We produced this toolkit to showcase our efforts so that others who want to engage with the news media can learn from our work and expand the reach of this successful media training.

This toolkit is based on the lessons PRB has learned through Women's Edition, our global journalism project and model for much of our in-country and regional work with members of the news media. Women's Edition began in 1994 as a way to increase and strengthen reporting on population and reproductive health in developing countries. Historically, the project has gathered groups of as many as 15 senior-level journalists from developing countries for a two-year program that included four weeklong seminars, the first one in Washington, D.C., and the following three in other countries.

To date, 86 women journalists from 35 countries in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America, and the Caribbean have participated in Women's Edition, and the stories they reported have reached many millions of readers, listeners, and viewers.

Most importantly, their work has shined a light on, and in some cases has brought about, needed changes in health systems, programs, and policies.

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# Selection of Journalists

## Choosing 12 to 15 From Among 300+ Applicants

Through an application process in which interested journalists write essays and submit samples of their work, 12 to 15 women journalists are selected; successful applicants are at a level within an prominent media house where they have at least some influence over what gets into print, online, or on the air. They are not necessarily experts on population and reproductive health, but they must demonstrate their interest in these topics and related issues.

The application form requires a candidate to write two essays, one explaining why she wants to participate in Women's Edition and one describing a major reproductive health issue in her country and why it needs attention in the news media. An applicant must submit two samples of her work, and the names of two recommenders. The PRB media team uses these essays, work samples, and recommendations to gauge a candidate's ability to participate fully in and add value to the seminars, as well as her commitment to achieve the program's objectives.

A six-week recruiting period is required for a new Women's Edition group, during which more than 300 applications are submitted. We do consider freelancers when they can show that they work regularly with a media house. We usually select only one journalist from any given country, or two from a large country such as India, to attain the highest level of diversity in the group. We also require that their manager or supervisor approve (in writing) their participation in Women's Edition.

Keeping the training group small enables facilitators to pay attention to the needs of each participant; even the quietest ones won't get lost. Much of the success of Women's Edition has been because of its interactive nature—the journalists' sharing of experiences and challenges. The seminars are conducted in English, so all of the participants must have a working knowledge of English, but they may report in any language.



Application Sample

### Lesson Learned

After inviting and receiving acceptances from the journalists you want to include, keep a list of a few journalists who were not selected but who could fill in if anyone drops out. Sometimes a journalist who looks great on paper does not perform as well as expected, such as if her English turns out to be inadequate, or if she leaves her media house and can no longer have her reporting published. In these cases, explain to the journalist that you can no longer include her in the program and replace her with another candidate.

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# The First Seminar

## Objectives



At the first seminar, we make clear our main objective: to strengthen and increase coverage of population, reproductive health, and gender issues. The journalists are told that to continue to participate in Women's Edition, each of them must write or broadcast in-depth news reports based on the topics of the seminars and on study tours we organize for them. They decide what stories to write and produce. Seminar activities are designed to provide facts and evidence. It is the journalist's job to analyze the facts in the context of their own country and to produce news coverage that will resonate with the public and policymakers.

### Women's Edition Objectives

- To inform decisionmakers on policies affecting women through factual, accurate, and up-to-date media coverage that reflects women's needs and perspectives.
- To help shape public discussion of issues that affect women's reproductive health.
- To provide women with information that gives them better control of their lives.

### Women's Edition strengthens coverage of women's health, development, and population by increasing:

- Frequency and prominence of coverage.
- Correct use of data.
- Emphasis on women's perspectives.

Key Topics in Reproductive Health Women's Edition November 12-16, 2012	
<b>MONDAY</b> <b>11:00am - 12:00pm</b> How do we know what we know? What you can report, and what is a report of you. Moderator: Susan Goldberg, program director, International Development Information Program, USAID Panelists: PRB	<b>12:00pm - 1:00pm</b> Overview of reproductive health Keynote: Susan Goldberg, program director, International Development Information Program, USAID Moderator: Susan Goldberg, program director, International Development Information Program, USAID Panelists: PRB
<b>TUESDAY</b> <b>11:00am - 12:00pm</b> Overview of Extramarital and Contraception Moderator: Susan Goldberg, program director, International Development Information Program, USAID Panelists: PRB	<b>12:00pm - 1:00pm</b> Overview of Women's Rights Keynote: Susan Goldberg, program director, International Development Information Program, USAID Moderator: Susan Goldberg, program director, International Development Information Program, USAID Panelists: PRB



Agenda Sample

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# The First Seminar

## Logistics, Objectives, and Expectations

The journalists invited to join Women's Edition must have a valid passport (if they don't have one when they apply, they will need to get one if accepted). PRB provides letters of invitation and other written documents to help them secure visas, if needed. PRB also makes flight and hotel reservations

limit their presentation to 15 or 20 minutes to allow enough time for questions, answers, and discussion. Presenters range from policymakers to physicians, nurses, and other health providers, as well as those who are affected by the issues that are being discussed.

“ Now I think globally and write locally. ”  
— NEPALI REPORTER

and provides per diems for meals and incidentals.

Whether in a conference room or visiting a project in the field, the journalists receive most of the information from population and reproductive health experts. It is important to identify speakers who are good communicators and let them know which countries are represented in the group and the journalists' level of knowledge about the topic. It's also useful to review speakers' presentations ahead of time, if possible, to ensure they are informative but not too technical. We ask speakers to

The first seminar covers basic population, reproductive health, and gender status information. Among the materials given to the journalists are articles and fact sheets that elucidate the issues.

The first seminar is also when the journalists are introduced to data and trained to see their country through a statistical lens, using the most current PRB World Population Data Sheet as well as tables and charts from the Demographic and Health Survey for their countries.



**WHAT IS REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND HOW DO WE COVER IT?**



project.org



**“What Is Reproductive Health and How Do We Cover It?” Powerpoint**

### Lesson Learned

Respect journalists' independence by providing them with information but not telling them what to write.

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# Interactive Sessions and Open Discussion

## Make Time for Questions and Discussion

Speakers are encouraged to make their presentations interactive, rather than just deliver dry lectures to the journalists. The best way for journalists to understand the different contraceptive methods, for example, is to pass around samples of the actual devices. Ask speakers to keep their formal presentation to 15 to 20 minutes so as to leave time for questions, answers, and discussion about the topic.

Editorial sessions are built into the seminars during which the journalists critique work they have done, share reporting experiences, and discuss such topics as how to raise the profile of issues related to population and reproductive health in overall news coverage. In this way, they also learn about each other's countries, such as traditional practices that may be similar or differ markedly from those in their own countries and how these practices are or are not discussed publicly.



### Lesson Learned

When you work with the same journalists over a period of time, rather than “parachuting” in for a one-off training, the journalists form bonds, both personal and professional. These bonds serve to energize and motivate them toward the common goal you have set for them.

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# Study Tours and Site Visits

## Take Journalists Into the Field



During a typical seminar, try to spend more time outside of a meeting room than inside it. Take the journalists into the rural areas or a city's slums so that they can see first-hand problems and solutions and talk to the people affected. When organizing a trip to see a project such as a health clinic, arrange the logistics with the manager or supervisor in charge to make sure they understand what the journalists want to see and have access to. Arrange for them to talk to any staff and/or patients who will be

available at the time. Give the journalists as much free rein as possible throughout the visit, depending on time constraints.

Build each seminar upon a theme or specific topic that relates to population, family planning, and reproductive health, and select the venue for the seminar to complement that theme. A seminar can also be coordinated with an international conference to give the journalists an opportunity to cover the conference as well as attend a seminar.

“ Women’s Edition offered another dimension to how I usually write ... I was beginning to feel like I was treading the same ground, but the visits (to other countries) broadened my perspective and now I write from a different perspective. ”

- RINA JIMENEZ-DAVID, COLUMNIST AT THE DAILY INQUIRER IN THE PHILIPPINES



### Lesson Learned

When planning a site visit, whether a day or an overnight trip, consider the physical abilities of all of the journalists in the group as well as the facilitators, and make accommodations, such as for those unable to walk long distances or unwilling to sleep in rudimentary conditions.

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# Where We've Been

## South Africa: To Learn About Gender-Based Violence



After deciding in 2008 to focus a seminar on gender-based violence (GBV), we selected South Africa as a venue because it had one of the world's highest rates of GBV, many researchers studying GBV, and examples of effective programs for GBV survivors. South Africa's high level of HIV/AIDS offered another avenue the journalists could pursue. About half the seminar was spent visiting various sites, including a "one stop" rape crisis center in Soweto, an integrated residential shelter for women and children who survived violence in Johannesburg, the Gender and Health Research Unit at the globally respected Medical Research Council in Pretoria, and the multimedia health promotion and social change project Soul City. The journalists also spent a morning with award-winning South African journalist Charlene Smith, who is credited with raising national awareness around rape issues after she wrote about her own rape in 1999.



### Two Different Approaches to Treat Survivors of Domestic Violence

BY ANA CAROLINA ALPÉREZ

[Read Story](#)

### Malawi: The Challenge of Reporting a Rape

BY PUSHPA JAMIESON

[Read Story](#)

[View Agenda](#)

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# Where We've Been

## Ethiopia: To Learn About Community-Based Health Care



Community-based health care was the theme for a 2013 seminar in Ethiopia, where Women's Edition journalists were able to see first-hand how the country's extensive network of Health Posts and Health Centers works. We focused on Ethiopia's community health workers who are credited with substantially increasing contraceptive use and reducing the fertility rate. The journalists also visited the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital, a pioneering effort led by Australian obstetrician and gynecologist Catherine Hamlin and her husband to treat girls and women with obstetric fistula. The seminar was timed to coordinate with the 2013 International Conference on Family Planning, and as a result half of the journalists were able to remain in Addis, with PRB support, to cover the conference.

[View Agenda](#)

### **A Healthy Exchange – Learning From Ethiopia's Maternal Care System**

BY MADHAVI RAJADHYAKSHA

[Read Story](#)

### **Family Planning: Uganda Criticized**

BY ANNE MUGISA

[Read Story](#)

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# Where We've Been

## Senegal: To Learn About Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting and Cover Family Planning Conference



In 2011, PRB sponsored nearly three dozen journalists from 24 countries to cover the International Conference on Family Planning in Dakar, Senegal. These included 12 journalists from sub-Saharan Africa and Asia who were participating in Women's Edition, 11 reporters from East and West Africa, and 10 who were based in Dakar. During the conference, the PRB media team helped the journalists to line up interviews, write their stories, and develop story ideas to pursue in their home countries after the conference. Before the conference, PRB took the Women's Edition journalists on an overnight trip to visit two villages that have benefited from the work of the NGO Tostan on reproductive health, including female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) and family planning. This two-day trip gave the journalists an opportunity to learn about programs in the field and better understand community-based approaches to family planning and reproductive health. Tostan's executive director, Molly Melching, accompanied the group and hosted them at the Tostan Thies Regional Training Center, where she explained the NGO's community-led and rights-based approach to development.

### Liberian Journalist Writes About the Unspeakable

The trip to Senegalese villages that once practiced FGM/C struck a nerve with Liberian journalist Tete C. Karneh. FGM/C is practiced in her country by the Sande secret society, which prohibits women from talking about it. But Karneh wrote an editorial anyway, saying in it: "It is time to introduce a law and make an urgent effort to end this outdated practice." Her piece was first published by an online news agency, and when the editor of another news organization saw it, she arranged for a reporter to do a story that would run along with Karneh's editorial on International Women's Day, March 8, 2012. The backlash resulted in threats against the reporter and Karneh and sent both into hiding. However, their reporting temporarily stopped FGM/C in Liberia, and currently some in the government are trying to outlaw the practice.

[View Agenda](#)[Read Story](#)

### Lesson Learned

Again, respect the independence and integrity of journalists. Tete Karneh told a Liberian journalist shortly after the controversy: "I understand the risks, but I think we're doing the right thing," she said. "We need to talk about the issue in this country. If a doctor tells us that it (FGC) is harmful, we have to speak about it because we are journalists, and we have the right to speak about it if it is harmful to people."

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# Where We've Been

## Jamaica: To See What They've Done with Age-Appropriate Sex Education in Schools



In Jamaica in 2014, Women's Edition journalists visited a country that was at an intermediate stage of its demographic transition, with a total fertility rate of 2.3 children per woman. But Jamaica still faced reproductive health challenges similar to those in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, including a high rate of HIV infection. This seminar highlighted Jamaica's development progress and the ways in which it was dealing with high rates of teenage pregnancy, gender-based violence, and HIV. Journalists visited an innovative community-based NGO that provides at-risk young people with life skills that enable them to avoid violence as well as income-producing skills like barbering and hair-braiding. The journalists were briefed on and interviewed participants in a program that has a global reputation as a "best practice" for helping girls who get pregnant while in school continue their education. They also visited primary and junior high schools where they sat in on Health and Family Life Education classes during which students engaged in lively, age-appropriate discussions around sexuality.

[View Agenda](#)



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# Back in the Conference Room

## Some Journalistic Skills Must Be Honed with Presentations

### Numbers in the Newsroom

Spend time refreshing journalists' math skills. Whether in developed or developing countries, math literacy is imperative if journalists are going to be able to make sense of data. While they may push back initially, in short time they come around to realize that it's not as daunting as they feared; and if they understand data, they can find good stories in the numbers.

“ Interpreting, making stories out of, and giving statistics a human face is the most important skill I have learnt. ”

- WOMEN'S EDITION JOURNALIST

### Critiques

Set aside time for the journalists to critique each other's stories that were done after the previous training. Comments that journalists make to

their fellow journalists can carry more weight than those from trainers. Also, seeing each other's work can inspire them and result in more story ideas.

### Examine Current Controversies

A new global report or data can raise questions about how to report on important issues at the national and local levels. Such was the case in 2011 when a new study suggested that women using injectable contraceptive may be at increased risk of becoming infected with HIV. This was of particular concern in sub-Saharan Africa where injectables were a popular modern method contraceptive and maternal deaths and HIV rates were high. But some previous studies had shown no correlation. The World Health Organization was reviewing its guidance and the studies were being scrutinized at international conferences. Reporters had to be careful in reporting on this.

### DO YOU SPEAK MATH? (Adventures in Numberland)

Deborah Mesce  
May 2016



“Do You Speak Math?” Powerpoint

### READING RESEARCH INTELLIGENTLY



“Reading Research Intelligently” Powerpoint

### Lesson Learned

Skip the calculus; just refresh the math skills that journalists need every day in the newsroom, such as figuring out percentages, ratios, averages, and medians. And make it clear to them how correct calculations will improve their stories, such as by showing whether change has occurred and holding their government to account.

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# Other Training Models

## Adapting Approach to the Regional and Country Levels

Women's Edition represents a small number of the journalists whom PRB has trained through workshops, study tours, and site visits. In countries throughout sub-Saharan Africa, PRB has worked with small groups of journalists to inform them on population and reproductive health issues, to introduce them to health policymakers and health care experts and advocates, and to open new communication pathways between journalists and policymakers, experts, and advocates.

that have been credited with helping to win support for a law that raised the age of marriage to 18.

To supplement the face-to-face training, distribute relevant hard-copy materials to reporters, including fact sheets on reproductive health topics, monthly e-bulletins highlighting new research, and media guides with current data and tips on using it in news stories.

Keep journalists connected after and



“ I learn every day from articles posted by my fellow Women's Edition members. ”

- EMMA-CLAUDINE NTIRENGANYA, JOURNALIST IN RWANDA

For example, PRB worked with the Uganda Radio Network and 21 of its stations to bring together journalists and their local district health officers (DHOs) in an information exchange of sorts. The journalists were able to receive information from the DHOs, broadcast it to their audience, and then report on the audience feedback, which DHOs used to improve health services.

In Malawi, where one of PRB's Women's Edition alumna became a PRB consultant trainer, many journalists received regularly scheduled trainings

between workshops and seminars through electronic list serves. This enables them to share their stories and story ideas and to collaborate on stories, and it provides facilitators opportunities to offer guidance and respond to their questions.

Also, mentoring journalists via telephone and e-mail helps to maintain individual contact and is an opportunity to provide practical advice about the broader instruction they received at a workshop or seminar. In many newsrooms, journalists don't receive training or mentoring.



### Global Development Insider

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# Other Training Models

## Adapting Approach to the Regional and Country Levels

### Train Young People So Their Voices Can Be Heard

Teaching youth to be reporters and to produce their own radio programs can be an effective way to reach other young people and enable them to air their concerns. In Malawi, PRB worked with Developing Radio Partners to train students and members of youth groups who lived near two community radio stations and at Yoneco FM in Zomba, a station run by and for youth, to produce radio programs. The young people were informed about reproductive health issues, coached on interviewing techniques, instructed on program production, and shown how to engage with their local communities and peers and integrate them into their programs. The young people in Nkhotakota called their weekly program “Let’s Talk For Change” and it aired on the local community radio station; youth in Monkey Bay produced “Youth Take Action,” aired each week by Dzimwe Community Radio; and Yoneco broadcast “Youth Talk.” At the start of each week, the stations received



a two-page Weekly Bulletin that focused on a specific, relevant topic and provided background information; it also suggested people to interview and questions to ask. Impact of the broadcasts included a clinic director agreeing to make the youth-friendly part of the clinic more so by changing its hours from Wednesdays to Saturdays. Monkey Bay Hospital began making antiretroviral drugs available from its mobile clinic in response to concerns expressed

during one of the programs by youth who had to walk long distances to get the drugs from the hospital’s main facility. And Yoneco’s program, after airing a panel discussion on child marriages, contributed to more than 50 of such marriages being dissolved and five village heads being fired for condoning the marriages.

### Lesson Learned

Training young people to raise their voices can be an effective way for them to become part of the policymaking process.

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# Other Training Models

## Adapting Approach to the Regional and Country Levels



### Bring Journalists Together with District Health Officials

Improving communication between journalists and local health officials can significantly improve the news segments and programs the journalists produce as well as the health services provided to the public. PRB worked with the Uganda Radio Network (URN) for several years to build the capacity of journalists at about 20 of the network's smaller stations to report on family planning and reproductive health issues. At one of URN's annual training workshops, they included local district health officials from the areas covered by each of the radio stations to address complaints from journalists that they weren't able to get information from these officials. After the workshop, officers in two districts directed public health workers in their districts to provide information when it was requested.

### Lesson Learned

Including Ministry of Health experts in training workshops allows journalists to hear, first hand, from high-level officials what is going on, but building trust between local health officials and journalists can be an even more important link in the communications chain. If local officials won't talk to journalists, how can journalists adequately research topics and provide balanced and accurate reporting?

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# Other Training Models

## Adapting Approach to the Regional and Country Levels



### Filling the Information Gap

Radio programs on Uganda Radio Network stations that focus on family planning and reproductive health have become very popular, filling an information gap and giving voice to women's concerns. For example, in Sembabule in central Uganda, the district health officer took action after hearing women explain on a radio program why they didn't want to deliver their babies in the local maternity ward. The women said the health workers were young and not from the area, and they did not speak the local language, which resulted in some of the health workers' questions being misinterpreted as vulgar or insensitive in the common community language. The district health officer transferred and reshuffled staff to provide older maternity midwives who could communicate in the local language.

In northern Uganda, a radio station in Lira broadcasts a program on reproductive health that has become a cornerstone for health information in the district. Health officials say they now see more men accompanying their wives to antenatal visits. Other radio stations broadcasting programs on these topics also have become centers of contact for listeners. In several areas, listeners walk long distances to the stations in search of presenters appearing on the programs to ask for more information or to be directed to health providers they have heard on the air. Also, health providers in Soroti Town credit programs on a local radio station for helping to send more women to health centers for maternal care.

### Lesson Learned

Public dialogue can produce obvious change, but ask district health officers and health providers what changes they're seeing, because they might not be as obvious but are just as important.

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# Sponsoring Supplements

## Providing the Resources for Good Reporting

Another training tool PRB uses is support for journalists to produce special newspaper supplements and broadcast programs on population, reproductive health, and family planning. Journalists who have participated in our programs propose production of a supplement or radio or TV program that they would not be able to produce without resources that enable reporters to travel and spend additional time reporting a package of stories, or a special in-depth program. If PRB

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“ I have learnt through your programme that real information is out there in the village. The story should not be told from the perspective of the officials only, but from the perspective of the villagers. ”

- MALLICK MNELA, JOURNALIST IN MALAWI

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determines a journalist's proposal to be financially realistic and have a worthy journalistic goal, support is provided through the journalist's media house. Editorial control of the content of the articles and programs remains with the media house, but PRB's media team is available to provide information, reporting guidance, and editing support if requested. Often these supplements and programs coincide with an international day, such as World Population Day or International Women's Day.

[View Supplements](#)

[Lesson Learned](#)

Combining training with real-time reporting strengthens a journalist's understanding of local issues. As one reporter put it after overseeing a supplement on a complicated economic development topic, "Indeed here, we all learnt a lot from the reporting."

### Individual Training Reaps Benefits

Producing a publication from start to finish as an exercise for journalists from various media houses can be an effective training tool. PRB organized such an effort with the Health Journalists Network in Uganda to produce an issue of the organization's magazine, The Health Digest, focusing on reproductive health policy in Uganda. The journalists each proposed a story idea s/he wanted to pursue, and these were honed by the magazine's executive editor and PRB's media team, which included a U.S.-based consultant editor. The PRB media team guided the journalists through their reporting and edited the stories that scrutinized Uganda's reproductive health policies and their implementation and laid a pathway for improvement. Months of reporting and editing paid off, as the 43-page magazine won the top Global Media Award in December 2014.

[View Magazine](#)

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# What Have We Learned?

## Top 12 Takeaways

- ONE** Respect journalists' independence by providing them with information but not telling them what to write.
- TWO** Work with the same journalists over a period of time, rather than "parachuting" into a country and conducting one-off trainings.
- THREE** Maintain contact with the journalists in between workshops and seminars so they can share their articles and programs and you can provide feedback.
- FOUR** For national workshops, bring in local experts who are influential among policymakers but who may not be well known or accessible to journalists; the purpose of this is to clear the pathway for better communication.
- FIVE** Provide journalists with paper or digital copies of the material that experts present, and distribute regularly e-bulletins such as PRB's Global Development Insider.
- SIX** Work with journalists on their math skills so they can understand, analyze, and use data correctly; help them translate data into their stories so that it is comprehensible to average readers, and show them how they can find news stories in data.
- SEVEN** Use journalists' evaluations of seminars, workshops, and study tours to adapt the activities so they are as effective as they can be.
- EIGHT** Make sure editors, supervisors, and managers understand the objectives of a training and that they support it.
- NINE** Build regional and global networks of journalists.
- TEN** Nurture journalists whom you have trained to lead the training of new groups of journalists.
- ELEVEN** Give journalists certificates for completing a series of workshops and achieving their objectives.
- TWELVE** Track the progress of the journalists you've trained, and stay in touch with them.

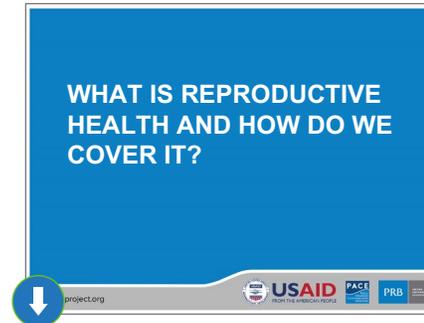
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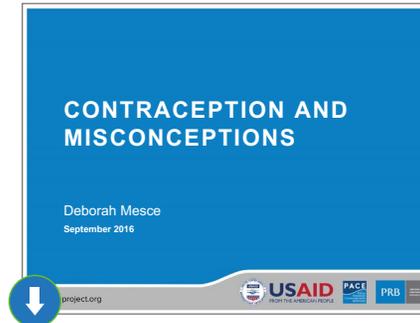
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# Sample Presentations

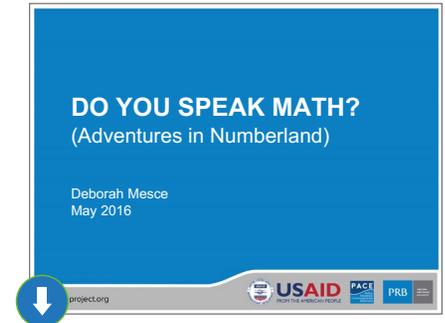
## Powerpoint Presentations



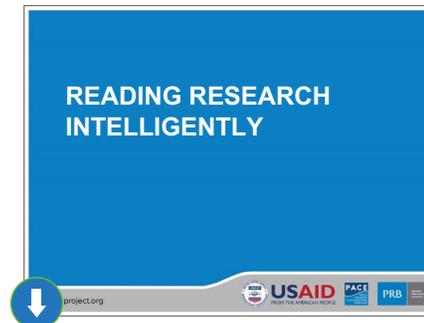
What Is Reproductive Health and How Do We Cover It?



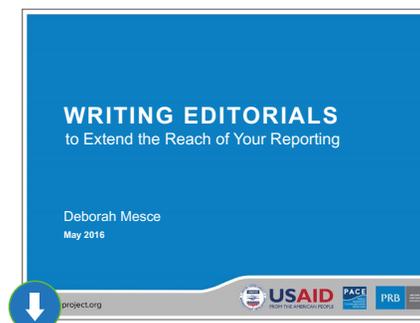
Contraception and Misconceptions



Do You Speak Math?



Reading Research Intelligently



Writing Editorials

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# Resources

## Information on Reproductive Health and Family Planning



U.S. Agency for International Development



PACE



PRB



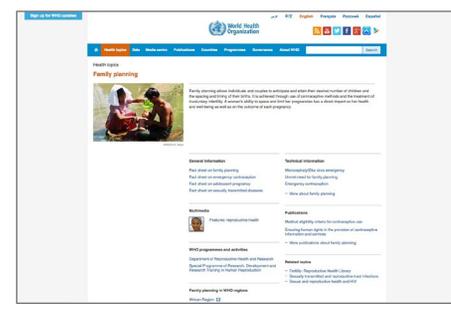
Demographic and Health Surveys



FP2020



World Health Organization (Reproductive Health)



World Health Organization (Family Planning)



Women's Edition

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## ABOUT THE POPULATION REFERENCE BUREAU

The Population Reference Bureau analyzes complex demographic data and social science research to provide the most objective, accurate, and up-to-date population information in a format that is easily understood by advocates, journalists, and decisionmakers alike. We work to ensure that policymakers rely on sound evidence, rather than anecdotal or outdated information, when creating population, health, and environmental policies.

Visit our website, [www.prb.org](http://www.prb.org), for reports, graphics, videos, multimedia presentations, and Data Finder—a searchable database of hundreds of indicators for thousands of places in the United States and around the world.

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